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CIA Seeks Legislation to Protect Its Sources

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—The Central Intelligence Agency is asking Congress for legislation that would enable it to better protect its sources and agents in view of growing Russian military strength and reduced economic growth in the free world.

CIA Director Adm. Stansfield Turner said the proposed legislation would reduce the number of congressional committees that must be informed of the agency's activities and relieve the agency from some provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

It would also prevent the disclosure of the identities of agents and sources overseas and protect CIA secrets from discovery during court proceedings, said Turner, speaking at the San Francisco Press Club.

Turner denied that the legislation would "unleash" the CIA, saying the agency can do its job without infringing on the constitutional rights of citizens.

"What we do seek and what we do need is to be able to protect our legitimate secrets better," he said.

Turner said the CIA will be required to provide better intelligence during the next decade.

For the first time, Turner said, foreign policy must be based on the "perception by the Soviets of something like military parity" with the United States.

He compared the CIA's effort to protect its sources with efforts by reporters to keep their sources confidential, and said that rigorous oversight practices of the CIA should prevent infringement of the civil rights of American citizens.